



Brighton
Unitarians

November 2018 Newsletter

Sunday Services

Please note: services are at 11 a.m. All are welcome.

We would be grateful if you would switch your phones to airplane mode before the start of the service.

04th November - Duncan Voice, Minister-Ditchling and Westgate
Pianist Pamela Nickels

11th November - Remembrance Service
Jef Jones, Lay Leader, Brighton Unitarian Church
Organist Maurice Rigby
This service starts with a two minute silence.
Please arrive in good time.

18th November - A celebration of our sacred space and the completion
of its restoration.
Jef Jones, Lay Leader, Brighton Unitarian Church
Pianist Joe Ward

25th November - Jane Blackall, Student Minister, Kensington
Pianist Kathy Pitt

Quiet Reflection 7-8 pm, 8th November

Welcome from Jef

Welcome to our newsletter for November.

The committee and I have been thinking about the time before services at our church, about the ten, fifteen minutes during which people arrive and settle for the start of the service. This used to be a time of quietness. There was no strict rule of silence but there was a habit of stillness. It was a moment in which people could settle into their time at church and begin to centre themselves. We think it would benefit our spiritual life as a church community to return to this habit of stillness before services. Our member Jo visited a church recently where ten minutes before the service the worship leader lit a candle with the words *I call for stillness*. We're going to start doing this - as soon as the Portico Repair Project is complete and the entrance to the church will once again be through the main doors. We hope you'll

appreciate this restoration of a time of stillness before services.

You can read more about this in my longer piece for the Newsletter below.

Also below you'll find two contributions that our Membership Secretary, Caroline Drijver, made to our service on October 7th celebrating our volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, if you have a skill or idea or any kind of contribution you would like to offer, please do speak to me to Caroline.

Talking of volunteers, lots of people are saying just how fine the portico looks now that the scaffolding has come down. It is a beautiful achievement brought about by our amazing church volunteers and our many friends in Brighton and beyond. The elegant, simple and solid entrance to our church seems to reinforce our positive and open-minded Unitarian values. Congratulations to everyone who has worked so hard for this moment.

Portico Rescue - Fundraising

The scaffolding is down and the top half of the facade looks absolutely fabulous - the best it has looked for 200 years! Work on the lower sections is taking place, including repair and replacement of some of the flagstones, painting of the black railings and the big red front door.

Do take the time to have a look at Sarah West's short [video of the scaffolding being taken down here](#)

Our fundraising efforts must, however, continue. The generosity of our members, friends and the people of Brighton has been tremendous and we cannot thank them enough BUT we have to have one last push to raise the required money to pay all the bills!

It is very easy to donate, just go to our website: www.brightonunitarian.org.uk and click on the **Just Giving** button.

Or, if you prefer, you can send a cheque, made payable to "Brighton Unitarian Church", to BUC, New Road, Brighton BN1 1UF.

Thank you.

From the Lay Leader

Why do you come to church?

I remember somebody asking me that question about 17 years ago. I had been coming to services at our church for about three months. It was an interesting question. I can't remember exactly how I answered but in hindsight I think I was looking for a different type of time and space in my life.

There were certainly lots of things about our church that I valued. I got a great deal from Rev Jane Barton's services. Her compassionate presence and her insight into the human condition always inspired me. Her sermons were full of writers and

thinkers I'd not come across. I enjoyed singing some of the hymns I remembered from school assembly. More than anything Jane and the congregation affirmed the spiritual life, and within it the value of stillness.

My first experience of the church had been the quiet reflection circle that Jane held once a month on a Sunday evening. In all kinds of ways I struggled with stillness in those days. I wasn't used to sitting still and my back would hurt! I would sit there feeling very self-conscious, waiting for the silence to end. Yet when it did I would often feel relieved but also sad that it had. Something kept drawing me back to our church and the stillness it provided. I remember saying that I felt magnetised, pulled towards something in a way that I could not explain. I know now how the human soul grows in stillness, struggles in it for sure, but is held, centred and nourished in it too. I think that's what was calling me.

Recently the committee and I have been discussing the time before services. We're conscious of just how busy and full our lives are today and how little quietness there is in the modern world. The moments before a service used to be a time when people would arrive and centre themselves. They would be still within themselves and allow the piano prelude to draw them into the service. We do from time to time have people asking if we could return to this and we think it would be good for our spiritual well-being if we could. Once we are able to enter the church through the main doors the service leader or one of our volunteers will light a candle ten minutes before the service and call for stillness in the church. We hope you will appreciate this return to a quiet time before the service starts.

Brighton Unitarian Charitable Incorporated Organisation

We are very pleased to confirm that Brighton Unitarian Church is now registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Our thanks to Jo O'Sullivan for making this possible.

Fundraiser Friday

Pinocchio Restaurant, New Road would like everyone to come along and dine at their restaurant for either lunch or dinner. The proceeds from this day will then be donated to the Church and its building appeal. So mark Friday 9th of November in your diary - you will not only get a great meal but be contributing to a worthy cause.

BUC is extremely grateful to the management and staff of Pinocchio for arranging this event and for their continuing support.

Quiet Reflective Circle

8th November 7pm

On the second Thursday of each month we gather for candle lighting and quiet reflection. This starts at 7pm and lasts no longer than an hour. There will be readings, time for candle- lighting, stillness and a few simple closing words.

If you've been having a busy week, and could do with some stillness, do come along. If you're looking for a time and place to reconnect with your spirit, do come along. If you'd like to sit quietly in a sacred place, please do come along. All are welcome!

Stitch'n'Time is back!

The sewing group will recommence on the 14th November and 12th December, 6.30 - 8.30pm at Jeannie 's house in Kemp Town. The main idea is to continue working on a Patchwork Banner for the Church.

For more information please contact Jeannette on 0776 289 5901.

Grand Re-Opening of Brighton Unitarian Church

6 p.m. Saturday 24th November

We have worked so hard over recent years to secure our sacred space for future generations and very soon we will be able to enter the church through the main doors! Come and celebrate the completion of our Portico Repairs with our friends and supporters from Brighton and the South East.

Music will be provided by a range of different musicians, to both entertain us and showcase the church as a wonderful music and arts venue. There will be canapes and bubbles!

Thursday Evenings in the Church; a discussion

7pm, Thursday 22nd Nov

Several of our members and friends have expressed a wish for a weekly spiritual gathering in the church on a weekday evening. Two of our members, Jen and Jeannette, attended a workshop at the Unitarian Church in Kensington about the format they have developed for weekday meetings, known as Heart and Soul. Heart and Soul contemplative gatherings are usually led by members of the congregation and are a good opportunity to get to know people at a deeper level. If you feel enthusiastic about the prospect of midweek spiritual gatherings and experimenting with different forms of discussion and worship then please do come along to this meeting in the church on Thursday 22nd November at 7pm. Incidentally, the Heart and Soul format was created by Dr Jane Blackall, who is leading our service on 25th November.

Brighton and Hove Interfaith Service

Nov 25th at 3pm at St Peter's Church, Aldrington,
Portland Road, Hove BN3 5GD.

Following on from the Angel year in Brighton and Hove, the Interfaith Contact Group will dedicate its ever-popular annual Interfaith Service to the theme of Angels in Our City. Angels that serve in our community will be honoured, as well as the invisible forces of love and guardianship.

Caroline Lucas MP and the Mayor of Brighton, Cllr Dee Simson will participate.

Advance Notice of Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will be on Sunday 27th January 2019 after the service.

Friday Lunchtime Concerts November

02nd: Peter Mansfield (trombone) & Kathy Pitt (piano) - a programme to include music by Bach, Gershwin & Marcello.

09th: Jazz vocalist Lou Beckerman and pianist Joss Peach are delighted to return with 'A Scattering of Jazz Jewels!' An inspired journey with fresh interpretations of loved standards plus contemporary originals - soft ballads to blues; samba to swing...

16th: The LIPS Quintet with a concert of lively and graceful wind quintets. Barber's Summer Music will remind us all of the height of summer past, whilst Parker's Mississippi Five will provide a whimsical tour of America!

23rd: Pianist John Bruzon with a programme that will include music by: Scarlatti, Granados, Chopin and Liszt.

30th: Violinist Sophia Bartlette

Doors and coffee from 12 noon.

Concert 12.30 – 1.15 p.m.

Tickets £3.50 on the door.

Celebrating Volunteers

Our service on Oct 7th was a celebration of volunteering at our church. Our membership secretary Caroline Drijver made two contributions to this service which are below.

Part One

Like all churches, our church relies heavily on volunteers. It relies on the people who are volunteering now, and our very existence is due to those who have volunteered through the years.

First we should acknowledge that this church does not exist without its congregation, and in this way our primary commitment is to congregate.

There may be those of us in the congregation who will volunteer for something in the future, those of us who currently volunteer, those of us who have volunteered in the past and are resting, and those of us who contribute by attending.

So, to give an idea of the magnitude of the volunteering that occurs to support us in our spiritual journeys within this church, here is a list. Bear in mind too some things may be missing from this list. Hopefully not.

In no particular order.

Flowers- the bringing and arranging of flowers.
Setting up the church for a service and closing it down again afterwards.
Helping the person who set up with clearing up at the end
Greeting the congregation as they arrive and handing out the hymn books.
Being on the committee
Doing the refreshments after the service.
Washing up
Paid people who stay longer than they are paid – this becomes volunteering.
Doing a reading at a service.
Doing the church notices
Playing the piano at a service – there are people who do this without pay.
Providing other music at a service.
Bringing food to share.
Fund raising
Doing a survey
Lighting the chalice
Pastoral Care
Supporting events
Writing the newsletter
Writing documents such as policies
Doing accounts and finances
Safeguarding
Making a flyer
Making beautiful photographs
Providing other artwork.
Using your skills, knowledge, contacts to help the church.
Offering donations beyond the regular contributions.
Card making.

Some of you may be familiar with the Goose Story by Harry Clarke Noyes which I think is apt.

Next fall,
when you see Geese
heading South for the Winter,
flying along in V formation,
you might consider
what science has discovered
as to *why* they fly that way:
As each bird flaps its wings,
it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following.
By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least
71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance

of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation
to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

When the Head Goose gets tired,
it rotates back in the wing
and another goose flies point.

Geese honk from behind
to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick,
or is wounded by gunshots and falls out of formation,
two other geese fall out with that goose
and follow it down to lend help and protection.
They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly,
or until it dies.

Only then do they launch out on their own,
or with another formation
to catch up with their group.

This church cannot function without your commitment, energy, sharing of yourself,
your love.

May you be sustained
May you know the greatness of your contribution
May we all know the greatness of your contribution
And may you know when to rest, knowing the importance of simply congregating.

Part Two

A few years ago I was driving through a part of the Netherlands I was unfamiliar with. It was in the east, bordering Germany. The landscape was disturbing. Straight roads with dark boggy water as far as the eye could see, both sides of the road. There were dead silver birch trees leaning over, many of them with the tops snapped off, often with the snapped top dangling down. There was no green. Just the darkness of the water and the pale trees. Every now and then there were swans. This eerie scene went on for several miles, after which there were beautiful large green trees, lush fields, and an old redbrick factory. There was also an information board. I got out to read this. I had been driving through a peat restoration area. The sign proudly announced an EU funded project to restore these peatlands, saying that they would be fully restored by the year 3000. My heart felt powerfully uplifted that people today are laying the foundations for the earth and future generations in 1000 years time.

There was something of this in the fundraising events this year, and every year, for the repair and upkeep of this building. Everything we do now is not only for us now, but for future generations too.

And somewhere in Brighton, Britain, and the wider world there are people not yet known to us who will cross the threshold of this building, and these will form new congregations, each contributing as they are able. And like the volunteers of today,

they too may have family at home supporting them in this by enabling them to take time out to volunteer.

And for us now, a short story:

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. She told her employer of her plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with friends and family. She would miss the income, but her body ached and she needed to retire.

The employer was sorry to see this good worker go and asked if she could build just one more house as a personal favour. The carpenter said yes. She liked her employer, and as it was a personal favour she and those working with her worked hard and made the house especially beautiful on outside and the inside.

When the carpenter finished her work and the employer came to inspect the house, the employer handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

Brighton Gay Men's Chorus Offering Support for BUC's Building Appeal

The Chorus' winter show "Pull A Cracker – Christmas Comes Early with Brighton Gay Men's Chorus" at the Dome Concert Hall on 8th December and will raise funds for Brighton Unitarian's Building Appeal Fund and The Sussex Beacon. We are grateful to the Chorus for making us their home and for their fabulous support!

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 9th November, Fundraiser Friday. Pinocchio Restaurant, New Road would like everyone to come along and dine at their restaurant for either lunch or dinner. The proceeds from this day will then be donated to the Church's building appeal.

Saturday 10th November, doors 7.30 p.m. Concert 8 p.m. The One World Orchestra Comes Home to Brighton. The 18 piece One World (jazz) Orchestra plays music for Brighton. Donations bar in aid of BUC's Building Appeal Fund.

Saturday 24th November, 6 p.m. Grand Re-Opening of Brighton Unitarian following the completion of the restoration of the portico.

Saturday 8th December, Gala Fundraising Concert, organised by Joe Ward. Doors 7 p.m. Concert 7.30 p.m. Tickets £15 (£12 conc) on the door or call 01273 696022 to reserve.

